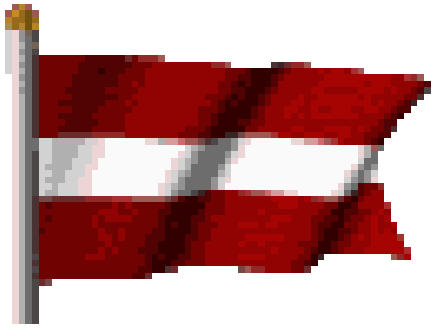
TRAVELER'S BRIEFING



LATVIA

(Latvijas Republika)

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BACKGROUND

Full Name: Republic of Latvia

Capital: Riga

Population: 2,353,874 (est)

Type of government: Parliamentary Dem

Head of government: PM Vilis Kristopan

Official language(s) Lettish

Economy: Socialist- capitalist

Religions: Lutheran (36%) Roman Catho
russian Orthodox (20%)

TRAVEL

Travel restrictions: None

International Airport: Riga

Flights from Frankfurt: Air Baltic

Other methods of arrival: Ship/road/rail

U.S. Embassy address: Raina Boulevard 7, LV-1510 Riga
Tel: 371-7-210-005/ext 122/123/161/; FAX: 371-7-503-499

Transportation: Public transportation: Good.

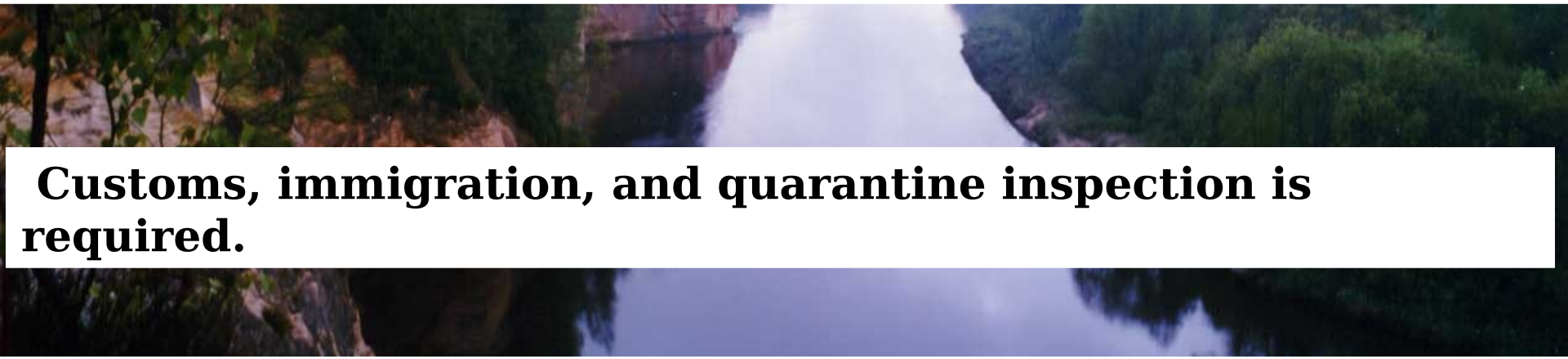
Urban Roads/Maintenance: Good.

Rural roads/Maintenance: Fair.

Availability of roadside assistance: Fair. Latvian highways are slowly being upgraded after years of little or no maintenance, but can be treacherous to the unwary. The speed limit is 50 km/hr in towns, and 90 km/hr on the open road, unless otherwise marked.

ENTRY/EXIT

Travel Necessities: Passports are required. Visas are not required for visits up to 90 days. A visa is required if cumulative time in Latvia is more than 90 days per calendar year. When required, travelers should obtain a visa in advance from the Latvian Embassy in Washington, DC or a Latvian diplomatic mission overseas. Travelers remaining in Latvia for more than 90 days must apply in-country for temporary residency. For official travel, a no-fee passport is required.



Customs, immigration, and quarantine inspection is required.

Duty-free entry for used personal effects:

HELPFUL HINTS

Special restrictions: Latvia is a nation in the midst of economic transition. Most tourist facilities found in a Western European city are available in Riga, the capital. However, many of the goods and services taken for granted in other countries are not yet available outside Riga. Telephone connections with the U.S. are generally reliable. However 1-800 numbers cannot be accessed from Latvia. Use of international long-distance calling cards is limited. Check with your long-distance carrier before departure. Some local companies offer computer Internet access. Many hotels in Riga allow their guests to use the fax machine to receive and send messages. Facsimile transmissions may also be made from several post offices in downtown Riga. Travelers are urged to consider their method of maintaining contact with family and friends when making their pre-travel preparations

Amembassy Riga operating hours are 0900-1700L Mon-Fri.
USDAO Riga observes US and Latvian holidays.
Police 24-hour emergency number: 7219-310

MONEY

Currency restrictions: Latvia has a freely convertible permanent currency (the Latvian lat). Travelers checks and credit cards are accepted at major hotels and restaurants. Latvian vendors only deal with Latvian currency (lats). US currency that is dated 1990 or later can be converted at local exchanges. The currency must be unmarked and in good condition. Various ATMs are available to obtain local currency. Travelers checks and credit cards are accepted at major hotels and restaurants.

Rate: Approximate: .59 lats for $1.

Lyn Hughes/Liaison Agency
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HEALTH

Major threats: diarrhea, respiratory diseases, accidents, arthropod-borne diseases, STDs, cold injuries, and industrial pollution.

Availability of medical services: Poor. Medical care in Latvia is limited. The Amembassy maintains a list of English-speaking physicians in the area. There is a serious shortage of basic medical supplies, including disposable needles and anesthetics. Many antibiotics are now available, although they

Medical Insurance: May not apply in Latvia.

Status of hospitals: Poor.

Health Precautions: Diphtheria, hepatitis, and tick-borne encephalitis are endemic. Insure immunizations are current before entering Latvia.

Immunizations: Hep A (recommended), Hep B (recommended), TB (recommended) MMR (recommended) and tetanus-disptheria boosters (recommended).

FORCE PROTECTION

Country Clearance: Required for all military personnel traveling to Latvia. You obtain this by going through your S3/G3 section. This must be done at least 30 days ahead of scheduled visit. DV visits will also be coordinated through G3/S3 channels.

Briefings: AT/FP level I brief from command's Level II trainer or equivalent.

The legal alcohol limit for drivers is zero, and speed traps are common. U.S. drivers' licenses are not valid in Latvia, and American drivers must use a valid International Driver's License issued through the American Automobile Association. After 90 days, Americans must apply for a Latvian license.

CRIME

Criminal Activities: Street crime has increased in Latvia. Pickpockets stake out crowded areas and are known to target foreigners. Travelers should be careful to watch their pockets and handbags in public locations such as trains, buses and markets. Theft can occur on city streets and in stores during normal business hours. Auto theft is a prevalent problem. Burglaries of apartments and houses are also common. The same precautions taken in an unfamiliar U.S. urban center are useful in Latvia as well. The loss or theft of a U.S. passport should be reported immediately to the local police and the nearest U.S. Embassy's Consular Section.

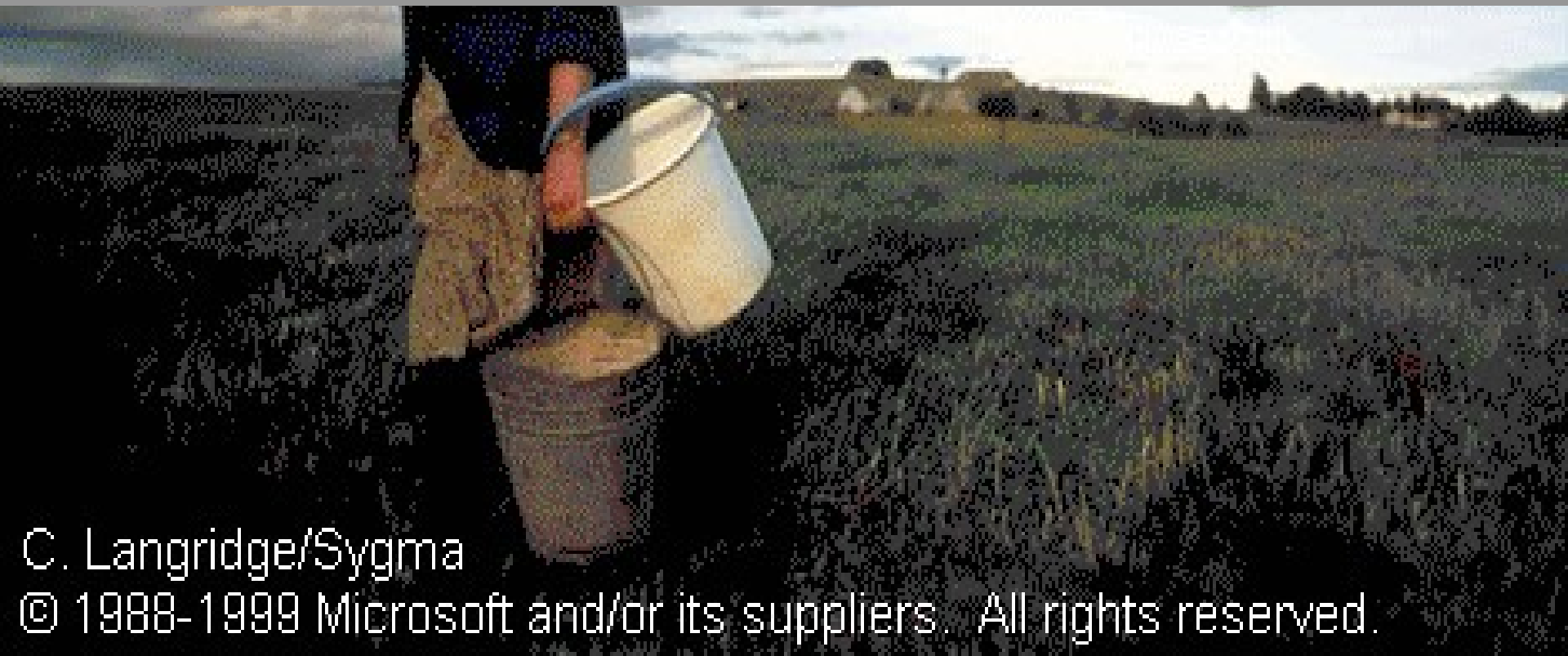
Latvia is strict on: Drugs. Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking in illegal drugs in Latvia are strict and convicted offenders can expect jail sentences and heavy fines.

WEATHER

http://cnn

CLOTHING

Uniform restrictions: Fall and winterweight clothing is worn throughout the year. Winters are very cold and woolens are recommended. Uniforms are authorized for official military business. Do not wear uniforms when traveling by public transportation.



C. Langridge/Sygma

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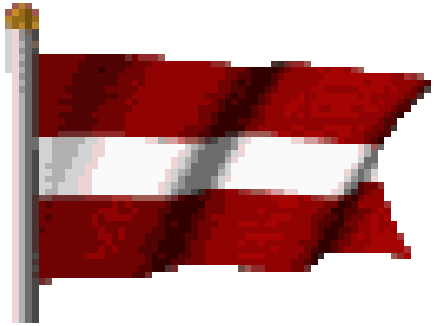

LATVIA